



TEMPLE SHIR SHALOM B'nai Mitzvah Handbook

(Everything Our Families Need to Know!)

Philosophy

Historically, Jewish people were counted as adults in a census at age 13. In modern Judaism, this is the age at which children have their first chance to read and teach from the Torah, and to actually lead the congregation in worship through an entire service.

At Temple Shir Shalom, our approach to B'nai mitzvah is unique for several reasons:

1. The B'nai mitzvah experience is not shared or "doubled." Each student will have the opportunity to lead services and become bar/bat mitzvah as an individual.
2. Each student has the benefit of working with all of our clergy. It is our philosophy that, "we're in this together!" The clergy at Temple Shir Shalom want to know and study with each child and each family when they experience a life cycle event here.
3. Our students do not just read from Torah and *Haftorah*. They lead the entire service from the *Barchu* through the Torah Reading. The reason for this is our core belief that our students should be able to pray at any temple or synagogue, anywhere in the world, as a result of what they have learned here at Temple Shir Shalom.

The responsibility for Jewish learning goes beyond bar and bat mitzvah. The B'nai mitzvah process really represents a beginning: the start of life as a more mature Jewish learner, one who is able to build on the skills and knowledge necessary to lead the congregation in worship and to read from Torah. It is our expectation that our B'nai mitzvah students will remain engaged and involved in our Temple's formal and informal educational program, including participation in our youth group. One way to set the stage for future Jewish learning is to keep the B'nai mitzvah experience in perspective. We hope that our families will not emphasize the party, and work to avoid the commercialism and materialism that interfere with the real meaning of the moment. Though it is important to celebrate this important event in the life of a child, with a *seudah mitzvah* (celebratory meal), we ask that you keep the focus on the learning that has taken place in preparation for the ceremony, and the child's ability to lead the service. This will help your family derive great meaning and joy from the most important moments, the ones that take place when your child is on the bimah.

What Do We Require?

Madrichim Program

Madrichim (pronounced *mah-dree-cheem*) means leaders and is a program like no other. We have designed a program for our 7th and 8th graders that we believe fosters leadership, and keeps our students interested and involved in Jewish life.

Our 7th grade *Madrichim* program takes a new approach to Jewish education, using camp-style, experiential and social learning in more concentrated blocks of time than we are allowed on a Sunday-only schedule. The *Madrichim* program has a special cadre of teachers and specialists, including our rabbis, working with our students to form bonds and explore Jewish themes in a very focused way.

The 7th grade program includes two camp retreats, as well as one or two monthly meetings in the form of Shabbatons (Friday night or Saturday programs), Sunday afternoon programs, or mid-week evening programs. The theme for our 7th graders is *B'tzelem Elohim* – Living in the Image of God.

The 8th grade program also includes two camp retreats, portions of which our 8th graders help to plan, as well as two monthly Sunday programs. One Sunday each month is a block of 3-4 hours during which 8th graders participate in *Tikkun Olam* (repairing the world) by volunteering as a group with local organizations which they have selected. The other Sunday is a shorter, one-hour program during which we develop leadership skills and build relationships by planning future social action projects and processing previous projects.

In order to fully benefit from this *Madrichim* program, students are required to be enrolled during their 7th and 8th grade years. For this reason, the two-year commitment is essential. Through exciting, content-rich programming, as well as many high-spirited team building activities, our students become leaders who:

- can lead and write worship services
- are involved in the life of our own communities and others through service activities
- can plan community programs
- have greater access to talented Jewish professionals (music, art, and camp specialists) largely as a result of the reconfigured time structure
- are beginning to understand that they have a responsibility for themselves as well as others, to actively participate in *tikkun olam*, the repair of our world
- have a strengthened Jewish identity through positive social relationships at Temple

Hebrew Requirements

Seventh grade students are required to continue their Hebrew studies. Students who are not working one-on-one with a tutor in the fall will meet with a teacher and study group once a week for 30-minute classes until they begin their one-on-one tutoring sessions.

Students should be fluent in the entire prayer service by the time they complete our program. **All B'nai mitzvah students must be enrolled in our Madrichim program, as well as our Hebrew program.** Our formal instruction in Hebrew ends with your child's bar/bat mitzvah; our *siddur* is our Hebrew curriculum.

Family Participation

All families of B'nai mitzvah children are required to attend:

1. **A sixth-grade parent meeting, also known as "B'nai Mitzvah Institute Meeting I"** – this serves as a meeting of all upcoming B'nai Mitzvah families, to review policies and procedures, as well as philosophy. At this meeting, general planning information will be disseminated, and the dates of the B'nai Mitzvah Institute workshops will be announced.
2. A follow up workshop called the **"B'nai Mitzvah Institute II,"** which will enrich your understanding of worship and Torah. This workshop will be offered in the spring, and will be announced in the *Scribe*, as well as through announcements at services, in mailings and flyers. The workshop will last about an hour and a half, focusing on Torah and how families can benefit and learn from the experience of helping a child prepare for Torah study. The curriculum will cover all the essential questions our families ask with regard to their role in helping a child prepare for the bar/bat mitzvah.
3. Families are required to attend a minimum of three B'nai Mitzvah services at Temple Shir Shalom. We strongly recommend attending more as a family. This is for your benefit – ***and three is a minimum number!*** The more familiar you are with our service, the more comfortable all of you will feel when it is your turn to be on the bimah. Although many students will be attending services at other congregations during this year, it is still necessary and desirable to attend at Shir Shalom.
4. We love having B'nai mitzvah parents also serve as ushers during this year. It is a great way to see how unique every bar/bat mitzvah is and additionally helps us create a comfortable environment no matter how many guests attend. You can sign up to usher online (<https://www.shirshalom.org/form/22-23-bnai-mitzvah-ushers>) or let **Rhonda Merzin**, know which services you will be able to attend. Rhonda can be reached by email at rhonda@shirshalom.org or 248-737-8700 ext 201.

B'nai Mitzvah Preparation

The specific pre-B'nai mitzvah process formally begins at least seven months prior to the date. At this time, you will receive a letter from Rabbi Moskowitz inviting you to come in for a meeting. This initial meeting is scheduled with Rabbi Moskowitz, the parent(s) and child. At this first appointment, the Rabbi does an informal assessment of the child's Hebrew reading ability, does a cursory interview, reviews the process, helps the child choose lines from the Torah portion, and assigns a tutor.

Tutoring begins approximately 20 to 26 weeks prior to the bar/bat mitzvah date, usually within 2-3 weeks of the first appointment with Rabbi Moskowitz. B'nai Mitzvah tutors are carefully selected. Tutorial sessions last one-half hour and are held at Temple. Tutoring is for the primary purpose of teaching Torah and reviewing prayers for fluency.

It has been our experience that 18 tutorial sessions (30 minutes each) are adequate to prepare our students. The cost for this is included in the B'nai Mitzvah fee paid to the Temple. About midway through the series of sessions with the tutor, Rabbi Daniel Schwartz will see each student in order to assess their progress. Should any additional tutorial time be needed ***beyond the 18 sessions, a \$30.00 per tutorial session fee will be added to your account.***

Most of our students do very well and are prepared in the allotted time – but **EVERYONE** must understand that this means that students **MUST** practice their reading and that every effort must be made to attend the scheduled sessions. (We have found that our students are most successful when they practice regularly with their parents.) This is a very busy time, but ultimately, your hard work will pay off in a great sense of accomplishment.

Additionally, our children are given the option to chant their Torah portions. If your child wants to embark on this experience, there are additional requirements in the months prior to your child's bar/bat mitzvah:

1. A Torah cantillation class taught by Cantor Penny Steyer is offered twice a year. In this class, your child will learn how to read and chant the ancient Torah symbols known as trope. There is a nominal fee for this class, which includes a recording of the trope melodies for practice.
2. Individual lessons with Cantor Steyer who will prepare your child in chanting his/her individual Torah portion. There is a fee associated with the extra preparation that chanting requires.

You will be making several extra trips to and from Temple during the busy weeks before the bar/bat mitzvah, and yes, *it may be necessary to curtail some of your child's other extracurricular activities during this most important time.* B'nai Mitzvah students need an adequate amount of rest and should not be overscheduled so that they can fully concentrate when they are studying. This is a very special "**priority time**" in your child's life!

Approximately ten weeks prior to the date, Rabbi Daniel Schwartz begins meeting with each student regularly. During this time, reading is practiced and refined and work is done with regard to the study of the child's portion. Lines from *Haftorah* are selected and community service work is discussed as an integral part of the student's total learning. Rabbis will follow up with your child to further define and/or monitor their chosen community service work.

The final three weeks before the bar/bat mitzvah are weekly sessions with Rabbi Moskowitz and/or Rabbi Daniel Schwartz, including the final session either the day of or the day before (depending on Friday night or Saturday morning service), which is a full rehearsal with parents and siblings. The child should plan to be excused from school on that day.

School vacations and summer camps can present challenges in terms of preparation time. Please inform the office of your plans, so that we can do our best to schedule your child appropriately and with enough time to learn and practice.

At the time that tutoring begins, each child receives a copy of our prayer book, and when your child is ready, a study book that contains his/her own Torah portion and the *Haftorah* reading for that day. About eight to twelve weeks before the month of the bar/bat mitzvah, each child will be asked to submit a recent photo (school pictures are fine) and a short question and answer form for publication in the *Scribe*. Deadlines are held to, so please be sure to have this information in to the office on time!

Date Confirmation & Room Requests

If you have not selected a bar or bat mitzvah date for your child yet, please fill out the date request form (<https://www.shirshalom.org/form/bnai-mitzvah-date-request.html>) or contact **Brian Fishman** at (248) 737-8700 ext. 216 or email at brian@shirshalom.org.

If you wish to reserve the social hall or other space at Temple, please call **Brian Fishman** at (248) 737-8700 ext. 216 or email at brian@shirshalom.org. **ALL BOOKINGS** must be verified and contracted through Brian in the Temple office. You are encouraged to book your event dates and needs as soon as possible. **A bar/bat mitzvah service date booking DOES NOT MEAN that there is a Temple Shir Shalom room booking for your party or your event.**

Although we provide a monthly report to Platinum Dish Catering with all B'nai Mitzvah dates, we strongly recommend that you contact Platinum Dish Catering to confirm your celebratory needs.

B'nai Mitzvah Fees & Expenses

We recognize that this is a costly time for families and in order to help you prepare for this, we would like to be very clear about what our policies are with regard to the payment of all B'nai mitzvah fees.

All of your temple accounts, including membership dues, building fund, religious school fees and any other outstanding bills you may have on account ***must be paid in full thirty (30) days prior to the bar/bat mitzvah.*** This would include any additional tutoring sessions that need to be paid.

You are encouraged to begin payments on your B'nai Mitzvah fees as early as possible. You will be billed twelve months prior to the date of B'nai mitzvah but you can begin payment even earlier than that. Please contact us to discuss payment options.

Mandatory Temple fees for the current fiscal year 2021/2022 (5782) are:

The following represents the pricing for the current fiscal year and will be changing for the 2022/2023 year. The updated prices will be out in May, 2022.

B'NAI MITZVAH FEE: \$1075.00**

This includes **18** half-hour sessions with a tutor, the rabbis' appointments, as well as the various administrative costs that go into the B'nai mitzvah process.

MADRICHIM PROGRAM: \$665.00 for each year's enrollment (7th and 8th grades)

Temple policy is that *all* B'nai mitzvah students must be enrolled in Madrichim to become a bar/bat mitzvah.

7TH GRADE HEBREW: \$72.50 per quarter**

Temple policy is that students who are not working one-on-one with a tutor in the fall will meet with a teacher and study group once a week for 30-minute classes until they begin their one-on-one tutoring sessions.

ONEG: \$775.00**

Your family will be sponsoring the Oneg (Friday night) or the Kiddush (Saturday morning) that follows services. This fee provides for sixty-five dozen assorted treats and pastries, two large fruit trays, coffee, lemonade and ice water. Please note that there is some flexibility with regard to enhancing the Oneg or Kiddush – please contact Platinum Dish Catering for more specific information.

BIMAH FLOWERS: \$200.00**

VIDEOGRAPHER: \$250.00**

We provide and schedule a videographer for your bar/bat mitzvah. You will be provided with a link to download the service or a USB Flash drive upon request approximately two weeks after your bar/bat mitzvah. *We automatically book the dates with the videographer* – if you **DO NOT** wish to have your service recorded, you **must** provide written notice to the office.

Thanks to the generosity of the **Sonnino Memorial Fund**, in loving memory of Sandra and Giorgio Sonnino, we are able to **livestream** those B’nai Mitzvah services that are also being recorded for our families. The livestream will be available on our public YouTube channel. Please contact the office if you would like to make the service private.

***** These fees are automatically billed twelve months prior to the event. They are current for the 2021-2022 fiscal year and subject to change. Please note that school fees must be paid in full upon enrollment, and dues must be current.***

Other (optional) fees:

TORAH CANTILLATION: \$100.00
(Chant Class)

CHANTING: \$375.00

This includes a number of private sessions with Cantor Penny Steyer following the Torah Cantillation class.

ROOM RENTAL: beginning at \$250.00 for the Andrew Foltyn Social Hall (member rate)***

This covers Temple's costs for set-up of the tables and chairs, breakdown and cleanup. Temple staff will work hard to ensure that every *simcha* is well managed and that the beauty of our Temple is maintained.

DANCE FLOOR RENTAL: beginning at \$150.00 (member rate)***

LCD PROJECTOR RENTAL: \$50.00 (member rate)***

PIANIST FOR HAVDALAH: \$150.00 (member rate)

MOBILE AUDIO SYSTEM: \$200.00 (member rate)***

******Four-hour rental.***

Other Considerations as you Make Your Decisions

Friday evening and Saturday morning services both offer wonderful Shabbat experiences; the basic prayers are the same with some slight nuances, but you and your child should attend both services to see which will best meet your needs.

Temple Shir Shalom offers many options for celebrating your special *simcha* – keeping in mind that this is a child's 13th birthday, and that the focus is on the child and his/her Torah study. To this end, you can choose to have a luncheon following a Saturday morning service, or a Saturday evening party, tailor-made to your family's needs. Some families are choosing to have Shabbat dinners at Temple prior to the Friday night service. There is a benefit to our temple when you choose to have your celebrations here, at your home congregation. In essence, you benefit too!

Again, for your space rental needs at Temple, please contact **Brian Fishman** at **(248) 737-8700 ext. 216** or brian@shirshalom.org. For your event or party needs, please contact Platinum Dish Catering.

Platinum Dish Catering

Temple Shir Shalom's in-house caterer enjoys a reputation for outstanding food and service. Please contact **Paul Wertz**, proprietor of Platinum Dish Catering, or his staff for assistance in your oneg/party planning decisions. For more information, do not hesitate to call Platinum Dish at (947) 207-9957.

Tzedakah Project/Community Service

An important part of the bar/bat mitzvah experience is doing a *tzedakah* project, which entails some sort of community service. Tzedakah, often translated as charity, comes from the Hebrew root *Tzedek*, meaning justice or righteousness. As Jews, we understand that it is one of our obligations to work towards a more righteous world.

Therefore, Temple Shir Shalom requires each student to participate in a Tzedakah project (or projects) for a minimum of 18 hours which gives the student an opportunity to show his/her personal commitment to being a partner with God in the repair of the world (*tikkun olam*). During your meetings with Rabbi Daniel (see page 4), your child will be able to discuss his/her project which should be completed during the Bar/Bat Mitzvah year.

Projects should be selected by the student and should involve his/her own time (about 18 hours), effort and imagination, while touching the lives of others. Students are encouraged to speak to the clergy, Director of Education, and the chair of our Social Action committee for further ideas. Federation's Alliance for Jewish Education also has a directory of project ideas with contact information at www.jewishdetroit.org/mitzvah.

Honoring Your Child

Social action and *tzedakah* are clearly themes of the B'nai mitzvah experience. We encourage our children to give back to their community, and we hope to model for them the importance of our commitment to Jewish life. There are a variety of ways that you can choose to further honor your child, while supporting our temple, as well – there are many options for continuing to give back that may appeal to you and your family. Some ideas are listed below:

Tree of Life – Leaves can be purchased and inscribed as a permanent tribute to your child's special day; please call the office for information. The cost of an engraved leaf is \$500.

Pavers – Brick pavers may be purchased and inscribed as a permanent tribute to your child's special day; please call the office for information. Pavers are placed in the pathway leading to the Carol & Henry Frank Interfaith Garden. The cost of an engraved paver is \$100 for a 4" x 4" brick and \$200 for an 8" x 8" brick.

Siddur – A copy of our prayerbook may be donated in honor of your family's *simcha*. For \$360, the *siddur* will be dedicated with a book plate inside the front cover in honor of your child's bar/bat mitzvah.

Chumash – A *Chumash*, the English Torah and commentary, can be donated and dedicated in honor of the B'nai mitzvah. Having these in our sanctuary allows congregants to follow along with the reading of Torah each week. *Chumashim* are available for \$100 and can be donated and dedicated with a book plate on the inside cover in honor of your child's bar/bat mitzvah.

Shabbat Card – A Shabbat Card can be published, with interesting information about Temple Shir Shalom and its events. These are beautifully done cards, available at Shabbat services for congregants and guests to take home. To have this printed in honor of your child's *simcha*, the cost is \$200.

Major Gifts to Temple – You may purchase or dedicate something special and lasting at Temple Shir Shalom to celebrate your child's accomplishment. The rabbis will be happy to discuss these options with you if you wish to consider a particular ritual object or furnishing.

Contributions – We have many worthy funds to contribute to in celebration of your *simcha*. These are listed in the *Scribe* and on our website (www.shirshalom.org/support). You may also wish to start a fund, particularly a special scholarship, as we are always looking to help our students participate in educational opportunities. You may contact the Temple office to find out more about these options.

Do not hesitate to call the office if you still have questions regarding any aspect of your child's bar/bat mitzvah experience. It is our goal to help make this time a highly rewarding one for your child, for you, and your entire family.

B'nai Mitzvah Time Line

36 - 48 months prior to:

- Reserve date.

18 - 24 months prior to:

- Reserve space needs at Temple and catering needs with Platinum Dish Catering.

During 7th & 8th grade year:

- Register and begin attending *Madrichim* program. And for those not in one-on-one tutoring, register and begin attending 7th Grade Hebrew.

6 - 18 months prior to:

- Sixth Grade Parent Meeting/B'nai Mitzvah Institute Meeting I and II*
** Fall birthdates are encouraged to attend the meetings 12-18 months prior to the scheduled B'nai Mitzvah date. However, if you have been unable to attend, please join us for the Spring meeting preceding your child's scheduled B'nai Mitzvah date.*

9 – 12 months prior to:

- Register for and begin 7th Grade Hebrew, have the first meeting with Rabbi.
- Your Temple account will be billed for the mandatory B'nai Mitzvah fees.

6 – 9 months prior to:

- Begin your one-on-one private Hebrew tutoring.
- Begin your *Tzedakah*/community service project.

3 – 6 months prior to:

- Start attending other B'nai Mitzvah services at Shir Shalom.
- Begin chant program with Cantor if desired.
- Confirm all contracted services provided by Temple and Platinum Dish Catering.
- Consider honoring your child with the options available on page 8.
- Begin meeting with Rabbi Daniel Schwartz.

8 – 12 weeks prior to:

- Prepare and submit Scribe information Sheet for inclusion in the *Scribe*.

One month prior to:

- Confirm your Temple account is paid in full.
- Complete and submit your "Service Information" sheet.

Zero to three weeks prior to:

- Weekly sessions with one of the Rabbis and a complete walkthrough of the service with Rabbis and Cantor.